
RA.03

Funding for Educational Organizations

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations
February 4, 2004

Issue

1. Concerns Remain Over Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM) Audit Finding

- The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) revised its grant agreement with BISM beginning in FY 2002 to include specific deliverables for each program area for which BISM was allocating a proportion of its State funding. The current Fiscal Year 2004 grant allocates State funding to three BISM program areas: Rehabilitation Training (\$600,000, 83% of the grant funds), Senior Services and Home Teaching (\$112,151, 15.5%), and Braille Production and Aids and Appliances (\$10,000, 1.5%).
- BISM submits quarterly reports to MSDE, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). The reports include: actual expenditures for the current quarter and year-to-date (by object); detail on salary expenditures for the current quarter and year-to-date; program narrative summarizing major activities within the BISM rehabilitation training department; program narrative on BISM senior services; progress report on grant agreement deliverables by program including referrals, participants, graduates, continuing education, etc.

Recommendations

1. Reduce grant to Blind Industries and Services of Maryland - \$75,000

The General Assembly has repeatedly demonstrated its interest that BISM reduce its reliance on State grant funds. In view of the reduction in State funding being recommended by DLS, the MSDE would ask the committee to maintain as much funding as possible for the BISM rehabilitation training services and senior services and home teaching. These programs align and complement priority areas within the public vocational rehabilitation program administered by DORS and have a direct service delivery impact not readily available elsewhere.

2. Reduce funding for State-aided educational institutions - \$213,000

We are most understanding and aware of the remaining structural imbalance in the State budget; however, we are opposed to an additional reduction to the State-aided educational institutions budget. The State-aided institutions' educational programs have taken large budget reductions in the last two years (more than \$2 million collectively) with the Baltimore Zoo's education program being reduced more than any other.

The State-aided institutions provide enrichment and support educational services to Maryland students and teachers that cannot be replicated in the regular classroom. The experiential, hands-on learning opportunities address the priorities of the MSDE and are based on State education goals and standards.

In FY 2002 the twenty-eight State-aided institutions served over 600,000 students and teachers. MSDE is estimating that the twenty-six institutions will serve 350,000 students and teachers in FY 2005. It is evident that the budget reductions have greatly impacted the numbers of students and teachers that will be served.

3. Delete funding for the Nonpublic Student Textbook Program - \$2,910,000

The State Board of Education did not request an appropriation for the Nonpublic Student Textbook Program.